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ABSTRACT

The report details the results of an annual survey conducted to determine the reasons that students at Kansas' Johnson County Community College (JCCC) drop classes. The overall JCCC attrition rate for classes starting on or before the 20th day of the fall 1999 semester was 12%. During the fall semester, students dropped 4,846 classes. The Science, Health Care, and Math Division recorded a 17% attrition rate, the highest of all the academic divisions. The Business and Technology Division recorded the lowest attrition rate (9%). Work schedule conflicts (21%) and personal problems (18%) continue to be among the reasons most frequently cited for dropping classes. Reasons over which JCCC may have some control, such as course difficulty, course scheduling, and instructors, also appeared to contribute to decisions to drop classes in a substantial number of instances. Course "too hard/bad grade" was the third most frequently cited reason for dropping a class overall (17%), and the most frequently cited reason in the Science, Health Care, and Math Division (27%). A high attrition class is defined as a class with an enrollment of 10 or more and an attrition rate of 40% or higher. Of the classes offered in the fall semester, less than 2% were high attrition classes. Appendices contain tabled findings. (JA)

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JCCC Drop Study/ Attrition Rates Fall 1999

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Office of Institutional Research

March 2000

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JCCC DROP STUDY/ATTRITION RATES

FALL 1999

Office of Institutional Research
Johnson County Community College
Overland Park, Kansas
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INTRODUCTION

Each fall, the Office of Institutional Research conducts a survey to determine the reasons JCCC students drop classes. The survey is administered throughout the semester by the Admissions Office at the time each drop request is processed. The following report details the results of this study for the fall 1999 semester. **Only those classes that start on or before the 20th day have been considered for detailed analysis in this report.** Actual attrition rates for fall 1999 classes starting on or before the 20th day are also provided, together with tables detailing results by academic division. The comments added to the survey by the students are published separately as a supplement to this report.

Requests for the supplement of verbatim comments, as well as questions and comments pertaining to this study should be directed to:

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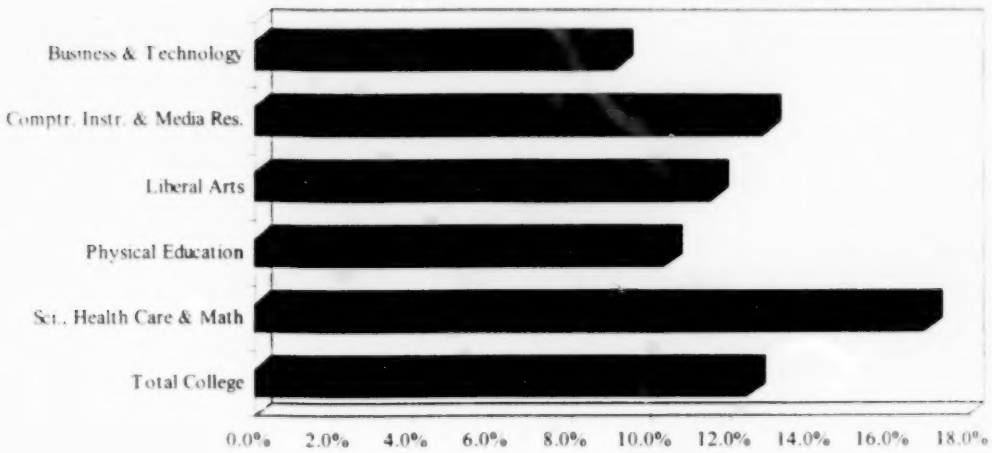
The overall JCCC attrition rate for classes starting on or before the 20th day of the fall 1999 semester was 12%. During the fall semester, students dropped 4,846 classes. Useable drop surveys were completed for 4,701 of those classes (97%).

The Science, Health Care, and Math Division recorded a 17% attrition rate, the highest of all the academic divisions (see Table 1). The Business and Technology Division recorded the lowest attrition rate (9%).

Figure 1
ATTRITION RATES BY DIVISION FALL 1999



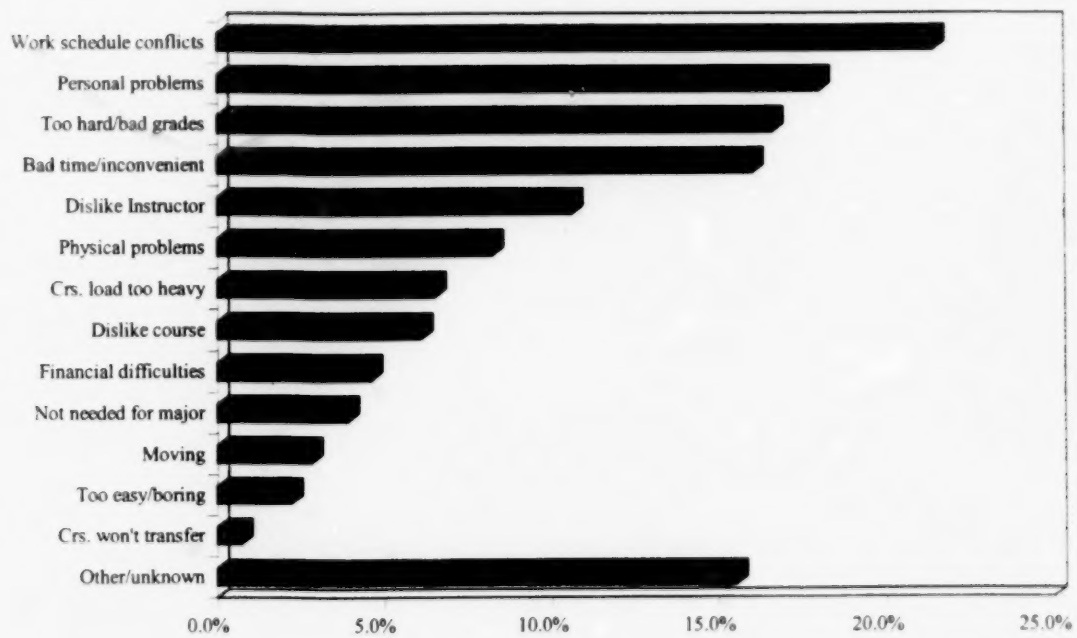
REASONS FOR DROPPING A CLASS

Work schedule conflicts (21%) and *personal problems* (18%) continue to be among the reasons most frequently cited for dropping classes. Both are factors over which JCCC has little control. With the exception of the Science, Health Care and Math Division, *work schedule conflicts* was the most frequently cited reason for dropping classes in all divisions. It was a particular problem for students dropping a Business and Technology class or a Computer Instruction and Media Resources class with over 27% citing this reason (see Tables 2 and 3).

Reasons over which JCCC may have some control such as course difficulty, course scheduling, and instructors appeared to contribute to decisions to drop classes in a substantial number of instances.

- *Course too hard/bad grades* was the third most frequently cited reason for dropping a class overall (17%), and the most frequently cited reason in the Science, Health Care and Math Division (27%).
- *Bad time/inconvenient* was cited by 16% of the respondents as a factor in their decision to drop a class, but 25% of those dropping a Physical Education class cited this reason.
- Nearly 11% of students cited *did not like the instructor* as a contributing factor in their dropping a class. Less than 2% of students dropping a Physical Education Division class cited this as a reason.

Figure 2
REASONS FOR DROPPING A CLASS FALL 1999



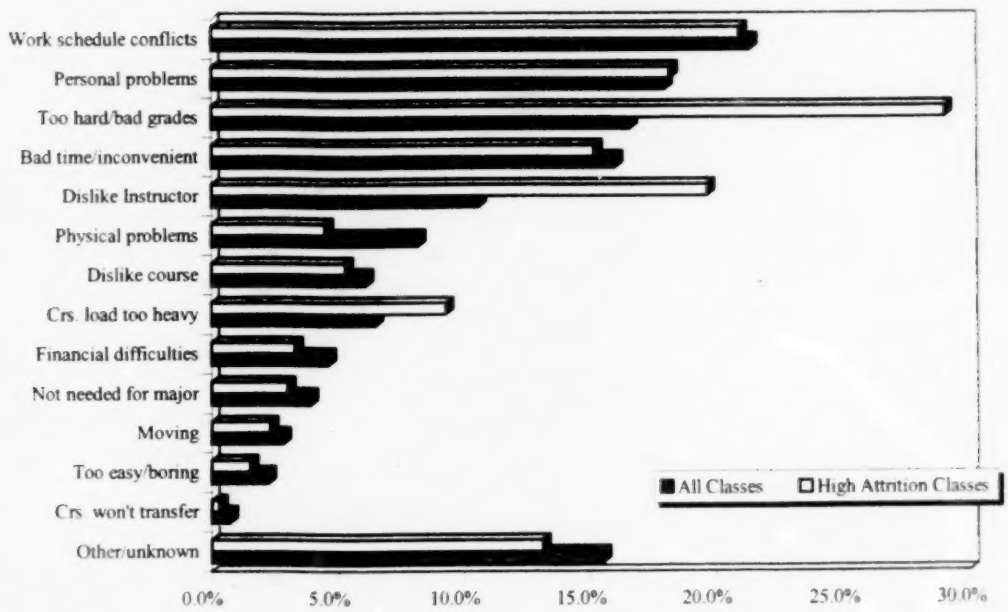
A high attrition class is defined as a class with an enrollment of 10 or more and an attrition rate of 40% or higher. Of the classes offered in the fall semester, less than 2% were high attrition classes (see Table 4). The Science, Health Care and Math Division reported the largest percentage of high attrition classes (5%).

Course difficulty and not liking the instructor were more significant factors in students dropping a high attrition class than for dropping classes as a whole.

- *Too hard/bad grades* was cited by 29% of students dropping a high attrition class compared to 17% for students dropping classes as a whole.
- *Did not like the instructor* was cited by nearly 20% of students dropping a high attrition class compared to 11% for students dropping classes as a whole. Nearly 37% of the students dropping a Computer Instruction and Media Resources Division high attrition class cited the instructor as one of the reasons they dropped the class. (See Tables 5 and 6).

While over 64% of the high attrition classes were taught by full-time faculty, over 86% of the high attrition classes in the Science, Health Care and Math Division were taught by full-time faculty (see Table 7).

Figure 3
COMPARISON OF REASONS FOR DROPPING CLASSES FALL 1999



MONTH IN WHICH CLASSES WERE DROPPED

More than half (55%) of the classes were dropped in the month of November (the last month students were eligible to drop a class). (See Table 8).

Figure 4
MONTH CLASSES WERE DROPPED FALL 1999

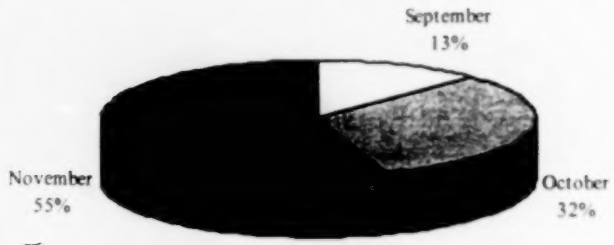


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Table 1

ACTUAL ATTRITION RATES
CLASSES STARTING ON OR BEFORE THE 20TH DAY
BY ACADEMIC DIVISION
FALL 1999[1]

	Number Enrolled	Number Dropped	Percent
Business & Technology Division	7,211	659	9.1%
Computer Instruction & Media Resources Division	3,089	395	12.8
Liberal Arts Division	17,830	2,050	11.5
Physical Education Division	1,700	175	10.3
Science, Health Care & Math Division	9,253	1,567	16.9
Dean	6	0	0.0
College Total	39,089	4,846	12.4

[1]Duplicated headcount.

Table 2

REASONS FOR DROPPING A CLASS
FALL 1999[1]

	Number (n=4,701)	Percent
Work schedule conflicts	1,005	21.4%
Personal problems	846	18.0
Too hard/bad grades	782	16.6
Bad time/inconvenient	752	16.0
Did not like instructor	499	10.6
Physical problems/illness	384	8.2
Courseload too heavy	305	6.5
Did not like course	289	6.1
Financial difficulties	217	4.6
Not needed for major	185	3.9
Moving	131	2.8
Too easy/boring	104	2.2
Course won't transfer	33	0.7
Other	230	4.9
Unknown	500	10.6

[1]Multiple response item; percentages are not additive.

Table 3

REASONS FOR DROPPING A CLASS
BY ACADEMIC DIVISION
FALL 1999[1]

	Number	Percent
Business & Technology Division	(n=655)	
Work schedule conflicts	180	27.5%
Personal problems	125	19.1
Bad time/inconvenient	97	14.8
Too hard/bad grades	72	11.0
Did not like instructor	66	10.0
Physical problems/illness	54	8.2
Courseload too heavy	42	6.4
Did not like course	40	6.1
Financial difficulties	27	4.1
Not needed for major	27	4.1
Moving	15	2.3
Too easy/boring	13	2.0
Course won't transfer	8	1.2
Other	49	7.5
Unknown	62	9.5
Computer Instruction & Media Resources Division	(n=355)	
Work schedule conflicts	98	27.6%
Bad time/inconvenient	51	14.4
Did not like course	36	10.1
Did not like instructor	36	10.1
Personal problems	36	10.0
Too hard/bad grades	33	9.3
Physical problems/illness	29	8.2
Courseload too heavy	25	7.0
Financial difficulties	10	2.8
Not needed for major	10	2.8
Too easy/boring	9	2.5
Moving	5	1.4
Course won't transfer	3	0.8
Other	27	7.6
Unknown	42	11.8

[1]Multiple response item; percentages are not additive.

Table 3 (continued)
REASONS FOR DROPPING A CLASS
BY ACADEMIC DIVISION
FALL 1999[1]

	Number	Percent
Liberal Arts Division	(n=1,983)	
Work schedule conflicts	418	21.1%
Personal problems	417	21.0
Bad time/inconvenient	358	18.1
Too hard/bad grades	257	13.0
Did not like instructor	223	11.2
Physical problems/illness	160	8.1
Did not like course	143	7.2
Courseload too heavy	124	6.3
Financial difficulties	116	5.8
Not needed for major	82	4.1
Moving	72	3.6
Too easy/boring	48	2.4
Course won't transfer	10	0.5
Other	84	4.2
Unknown	199	10.0
Physical Education Division	(n=166)	
Work schedule conflicts	42	25.3%
Bad time/inconvenient	42	25.3
Physical problems/illness	31	18.7
Personal problems	20	12.0
Courseload too heavy	10	6.0
Moving	7	4.2
Financial difficulties	6	3.6
Not needed for major	5	3.0
Did not like course	5	3.0
Too easy/boring	4	2.4
Course won't transfer	0	0.0
Too hard/bad grades	0	0.0
Did not like instructor	2	1.2
Other	9	5.4
Unknown	21	12.7

[1]Multiple response item; percentages are not additive.

Table 3 (continued)

REASONS FOR DROPPING A CLASS
BY ACADEMIC DIVISION
FALL 1999[1]

	Number	Percent
Science, Health Care, & Math Division	(n=1,542)	
Too hard/bad grades	420	27.2%
Work schedule conflicts	267	17.3
Personal problems	248	16.1
Bad time/inconvenient	204	13.2
Did not like instructor	172	11.2
Physical problems/illness	110	7.1
Courseload too heavy	104	6.7
Did not like course	65	4.2
Not needed for major	61	4.0
Financial difficulties	58	3.8
Moving	32	2.1
Too easy/boring	30	1.9
Course won't transfer	12	0.8
Other	61	4.0
Unknown	176	11.4

[1]Multiple response item; percentages are not additive.

Table 4
HIGH ATTRITION CLASSES[1]
FALL 1999

	Total Classes	High Attrition	Percent
Business & Technology Division	485	4	0.8%
Computer Instruction & Media Resources Division	202	2	1.0
Liberal Arts Division	1,059	14	1.3
Physical Education Division	81	0	0.0
Science, Health Care, & Math Division	480	22	4.6
Dean	1	0	0.0
College Total	2,308	42	1.8

[1]Defined as classes with an enrollment of 10 or more and an attrition rate of 40% or above.

Table 5
COMPARISON OF REASONS FOR DROPPING ALL CLASSES WITH REASONS FOR DROPPING HIGH ATTRITION CLASSES[1]
FALL 1999

	All Respondents (n=4,701)	High Attrition Class Respondents (n=396)
Work schedule conflicts	21.4%	21.0%
Personal problems	18.0	18.2
Too hard/bad grades	16.6	29.0
Bad time/inconvenient	16.0	15.2
Did not like instructor	10.6	19.7
Physical problems/illness	8.2	4.5
Courseload too heavy	6.5	9.3
Did not like course	6.1	5.3
Financial difficulties	4.6	3.3
Not needed for major	3.9	3.0
Moving	2.8	2.3
Too easy/boring	2.2	1.5
Course won't transfer	0.7	0.3
Other	4.9	3.3
Unknown	10.6	9.8

[1]Multiple response item; percentages are not additive.

Table 6

COMPARISON OF
REASONS FOR DROPPING ALL CLASSES WITH
REASONS FOR DROPPING HIGH ATTRITION CLASSES
BY ACADEMIC DIVISION[1]
FALL 1999

	All Respondents	High Attrition Class Respondents
Business & Technology Division	(n=655)	(n=27)
Work schedule conflicts	27.5%	37.0%
Personal problems	19.1	11.1
Bad time/inconvenient	14.8	29.6
Too hard/bad grades	11.0	22.2
Did not like instructor	10.1	7.4
Physical problems/illness	8.2	7.4
Courseload too heavy	6.4	14.8
Did not like course	6.1	0.0
Financial difficulties	4.1	3.7
Not needed for major	4.1	3.7
Moving	2.3	0.0
Too easy/boring	2.0	0.0
Course won't transfer	1.2	0.0
Other	7.5	3.7
Unknown	9.5	7.4
Computer Instruction & Media Resources Division	(n=355)	(n=19)
Work schedule conflicts	27.6%	31.6%
Bad time/inconvenient	14.4	10.5
Personal problems	10.1	15.8
Did not like course	10.1	15.8
Did not like instructor	10.1	36.8
Too hard/bad grades	9.3	5.3
Physical problems/illness	8.2	5.3
Courseload too heavy	7.0	10.5
Not needed for major	2.8	0.0
Financial difficulties	2.8	5.3
Too easy/boring	2.5	5.3
Moving	1.4	0.0
Course won't transfer	0.8	0.0
Other	7.6	5.3
Unknown	11.8	21.1

[1]Multiple response item; percentages are not additive.

Table 6 (continued)

COMPARISON OF
REASONS FOR DROPPING ALL CLASSES WITH
REASONS FOR DROPPING HIGH ATTRITION CLASSES
BY ACADEMIC DIVISION[1]
FALL 1999

	All Respondents	High Attrition Class Respondents
Liberal Arts Division	(n=1,983)	(n=117)
Work schedule conflicts	21.1%	18.8%
Personal problems	21.0	21.4
Bad time/inconvenient	18.1	16.2
Too hard/bad grades	13.0	18.8
Did not like instructor	11.2	29.1
Physical problems/illness	8.1	7.7
Did not like course	7.2	10.3
Courseload too heavy	6.3	7.7
Financial difficulties	5.8	3.4
Not needed for major	4.1	3.4
Moving	3.6	3.4
Too easy/boring	2.4	3.4
Course won't transfer	0.5	0.9
Other	4.2	2.6
Unknown	10.0	10.3
Physical Education Division	(n=166)	(n=0)
Work schedule conflicts	25.3%	
Bad time/inconvenient	25.3	
Physical problems/illness	18.7	
Personal problems	12.0	
Courseload too heavy	6.0	
Moving	4.2	
Financial difficulties	3.6	
Not needed for major	3.0	
Did not like course	3.0	
Too easy/boring	2.4	
Did not like instructor	1.2	
Course won't transfer	0.0	
Too hard/bad grades	0.0	
Other	5.4	
Unknown	12.7	

[1]Multiple response item; percentages are not additive.

Table 6 (continued)

COMPARISON OF
REASONS FOR DROPPING ALL CLASSES WITH
REASONS FOR DROPPING HIGH ATTRITION CLASSES
BY ACADEMIC DIVISION[1]
FALL 1999

	All Respondents	High Attrition Class Respondents
Science, Health Care, & Math Division	(n=1,542)	(n=233)
Too hard/bad grades	27.2%	36.9%
Work schedule conflicts	17.3	19.3
Personal problems	16.1	17.6
Bad time/inconvenient	13.2	13.3
Did not like instructor	11.2	15.0
Physical problems/illness	7.1	2.6
Courseload too heavy	6.7	9.4
Did not like course	4.2	2.6
Not needed for major	4.0	3.0
Financial difficulties	3.8	3.0
Moving	2.1	2.1
Too easy/boring	1.9	0.4
Course won't transfer	0.8	0.0
Other	4.0	3.4
Unknown	11.4	9.0

[1]Multiple response item; percentages are not additive.

Table 7

HIGH ATTRITION CLASSES[1] BY INSTRUCTOR TYPE
FALL 1999

Division	No. High Attrition	Instructor Type			
		Full Time	Percent	Part Time	Percent
Business & Technology Division	4	2	50.0%	2	50.0%
Computer Instruction & Media Resources. Division	2	0	0.0	2	100.0
Liberal Arts Division	14	6	42.9	8	57.1
Physical Education Division	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Science, Health Care & Math Division	22	18	81.8	4	18.2
Total	42	26	61.9	16	38.1

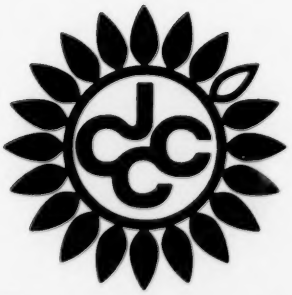
[1]Defined as classes with an enrollment of 10 or more and an attrition rate of 40% or higher.

Table 8

MONTH CLASSES WERE DROPPED[1]
FALL 1999

Month	Percent
September	12.6%
October	32.4
November	55.0

[1]Classes that started on or before the 20th day of the semester.



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